

RECOGNITION OF THE 26TH DISTRICT OF TEXAS' 2020 CONGRESSIONAL VETERANS COMMENDATION RECIPIENTS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the five recipients of the 26th District of Texas' 2020 Congressional Veterans Commendation. These men have faithfully served this Nation in both their military and civilian lives, and it is my great privilege to publicly recognize their significant contributions.

Mr. Paul Bastiach of Oak Point served in the U.S. Air Force for twenty-five years, fast as a Precision Measurement Equipment Specialist and later as the Commandant of the Airman Leadership School. Mr. Bastiach was recognized as the School's Flight Chief of the Year in 2000, and was awarded four Meritorious Service Medals, three Air Force Commendation Medals, and the Air Force Achievement Medal over the course of his tenure in the armed forces. In 2004, the Air Force further honored Mr. Bastiach with the Air Force Productivity Award, denoting an individual who has made such substantial improvements in productivity that the Air Force saved over \$1 million. Following his military career, Mr. Bastiach professionally served his fellow veterans as the Denton County Veteran Service Officer, as President of the Veterans County Service Officer Association of Texas (VCSOAT), and as the North Texas Region Director of VSOAT. His work has led to significant improvements to the Denton County VA's facilities, an increase of over \$200 million in gross benefits to Denton County Veterans, and the foundation of both the Veterans Community Navigator Program and the Denton County Veterans Coalition (DCVC). He currently serves as DCVC's Vice President and as the co-planner for the County's annual Veteran's Day Event.

Mr. Richard Cook of Double Oak served in the U.S. Navy from 1950 to 1971, in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. During the Korean War, Mr. Cook was assigned to the USS *Missouri*, the flagship of the Seventh Fleet, which played a pivotal role in multiple offensive maneuvers as part of the famed Task Force 77. Mr. Cook was promoted to the highest enlisted rank of Master Chief and was later commissioned as a Lieutenant. After 21 years on active duty, he transferred into the Naval Reserves, serving an additional ten years. Mr. Cook's service was recognized with the UN Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation, National Defense Service Medal, and the Meritorious Unit Commendation. After leaving his military career, Mr. Cook devoted his time and attention to serving his local community of Double Oak. He was first elected to the Town Council in 1994 and was then appointed Mayor in 1995. The citizens of Double Oak re-elected Mr. Cook as Mayor twice. In 2010, he was appointed as Mayor Emeritus. Sadly, Mr. Cook passed away on October 2, 2021. My condolences to his family and the community of Double Oak as we reflect upon his military service and recognize his civic accomplishments.

Mr. Jacob Schick of Frisco enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps one month after the 9/11

terrorist attacks, and fought as a member of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Corps Regiment, Bravo Company during Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2004, Mr. Schick's Humvee struck an improvised explosive device, resulting in the loss of his left leg and severe damage to his left arm. The U.S. Marine Corps recognized his sacrifice with the awarding of the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Selected Marine Corps Reserve Medal. Mr. Schick continued to serve as an active duty servicemember until he was medically discharged in 2011, having attained the rank of Corporal. Mr. Schick continued to serve his former comrades in arms at the Center for Brain Health and the Brain Performance Institute, where he conducted research into alleviating Traumatic Brain Injuries and Post Traumatic Stress. In addition, he was instrumental in founding the non-profit "22 Kill" to bring public awareness to the alarming rate of veteran suicides and he currently serves as CEO of the "One Tribe Foundation," which raises funds and provides support programs to assist veterans and first responders and their families.

Mr. Dennis Sheridan of Trophy Club was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army in 1969. During the Vietnam War, Mr. Sheridan was first assigned to Bravo Company and then to 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company as platoon leader. His outstanding command of 2nd Platoon was noted and he was designated as the Executive Officer and later Commanding Officer of Alpha Company. The U.S. Army recognized his service with the Combat Infantry Badge, the Army Commendation Medal, the Bronze Star with V Device, and the Bronze Star with One Oak Leaf. Mr. Sheridan rose to the rank of captain by the end of his active duty in 1972. Subsequent to his military career, Mr. Sheridan served as a Commissioner and Chair of the Trophy Club Planning and Zoning Commission, and he currently serves as a Town Councilman, and actively volunteers for numerous veterans' organizations in the DFW metroplex.

Finally, Mr. Danny Weakley of Little Elm served in the armed forces for over two decades as a member of the U.S. Army's 89th Military Police Brigade. Mr. Weakley's service included tours in Somalia, Qatar, and Iraq, and merited him two Bronze Star Medals, three counts of the Meritorious Service Medal, three Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, a GWOT Service Medal, a GWOT Expeditionary Medal, three Iraq Campaign Medals, and the Combat Action Badge. Mr. Weakley retired in 2008, having attained the rank of Master Sergeant. A graduate of Little Elm's Fire, Police and Government Academy, he volunteers with multiple Little Elm events and he spearheaded new civic programs including Little Elm's Veteran's Ruck March and the Honor Park Cleanup.

I am truly privileged to thank all five of our recipients for their honorable service in the Armed Forces and their whole-hearted dedication to their communities following their military careers. Their leadership, devotion, and sacrifice truly exemplify the finest traditions of the United States Military. I join the friends, families, and communities of these recipients in expressing sincere appreciation and congratulating them on their commendation.

NATALE CONSTANTINO—EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, this month, I had the pleasure of presenting Nate Costantino with his Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Nate had noticed the Gilda's Club organization in Northfield lacked a recreational area for the youth who utilized the building. For his Eagle Scout Project, Nate addressed this issue and constructed a playground area in the back of the Gilda's Club building. This playground will be enjoyed by Northfield residents for years to come. This young man should be proud of his accomplishments and it was my honor to have had the opportunity to recognize him for his service to the South Jersey community. God Bless Nate and God Bless America.

REMEMBERING CHARLIE ARTHUR ZINK

HON. HALEY M. STEVENS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Ms. STEVENS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in memory of Charlie Arthur Zink, who passed away on June 20, 2021.

On March 3, 2006, Charlie was born in Boston, Massachusetts, to Eric and Alyssa Zink. Charlie was a vibrant young child with so many passions in life. Playing the video game Planet Coaster, he pursued his dream of becoming a world-renowned roller-coaster designer. As part of his summer RV travel plans, he planned to visit Cedar Point and other amusement parks along the way to ride the steepest, fastest and craziest coasters in the world.

Charlie was a rising 10th grader at Bedford High School. Inspired by many Bedford educators, Charlie was looking forward to his new classes in the fall. He was proud to work at his family's restaurant, the Puritan Backroom, and he represented the fifth generation to bus tables and work in the kitchen.

Charlie was a great athlete but loved basketball more than anything. He loved to play pickup with his siblings in the backyard under the lights, and he played as part of many teams over his short career.

Charlie is survived by his parents, three siblings, and two pets whom he loved dearly: 13-year-old Annie, 11-year-old Eva, 8-year-old Oliver, Wilson the dog, and Hazel the cat. Charlie's uncle, Mr. Chris Pappas, represents New Hampshire's first district and loved his first nephew with all his heart. Alongside Mr. Pappas and his family, we join them in honoring the wonderful and inspiring life of Charles Zink.

Charlie will also be remembered for being a fiercely loyal companion, a son, sibling, and friend. We will never forget his curiosity and love for adventure, memories that will continue to inspire everyone who knew him.